

Original URL: <http://www.jsonline.com/news/racine/jan05/297043.asp>

## Sturtevant residents voice hopes for village development

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Special to the Journal Sentinel

*Posted: Jan. 29, 2005*

**Sturtevant** - Local business owners and residents along both Highway 11 and Wisconsin St. have mixed feelings about the study commissioned by the Village Board late last year that will put together a plan for the village's economic growth over the next five to 10 years.

Village officials have confirmed the study will be released sometime next month.

Barrientos Design and Consulting of Milwaukee has conducted focus groups and public hearings to ask questions about how commercial and residential property owners see the future of the village developing.

### Depot's move questioned

Dan Christiansen, owner of J.Q. Foxes restaurant and bar on Wisconsin St., is frustrated with several development issues in Sturtevant, including locating the new Amtrak depot in The Renaissance business park, about a mile north of where the station now stands. The current station is just across the street from the tavern.

"Moving the Amtrak depot means people not coming into my business anymore for coffee or soda or a sandwich," he said. "Why are we spending this kind of money for no benefit? All the new depot will do is pull more people away from this area."

Christiansen added that most village residents he knows don't even consider The Renaissance to be part of Sturtevant, and linking the park to the rest of the village won't change that perception or direct more traffic to Wisconsin St.

"The business park is a mile from the Wisconsin St. businesses, and linking the park with this street won't change the fact that people who park at the new depot will simply travel along Highway 20 and bypass this area completely," he said.

Willie Kittel lives on Highway 11, or Durand Ave., and although she feels the study's results are long overdue, she wonders if it isn't too little too late.

"The more businesses we can attract to our village means the less our taxes go up, and that's good," she said. "But moving the depot away from this central area is only going to pull traffic away, too."

Village President Steve Jansen has long felt the village could support a full-service food market and Kittel agrees, with conditions.

"Yes, a food store could do well here as long as it's unique since most of us just drive down the street to Wal-Mart," she said. "It would have to have some class and offer items people would really be interested in."

### Board's vision praised

Scott Sorenson opened Lil' Scott's Customs a few years ago on Wisconsin St., but he's a longtime resident and he likes the board's vision of creating a downtown for Sturtevant.

"That'd be nice, especially because we need to get traffic back down here," he said.

Betty Johnson has lived on Durand Ave. for many years. She said that though the stretch of road where she lives is already developed with both residential and commercial property, she'd like to see better planning and development at the east and west ends of Highway 11 as it runs through the village.

Her son, John Johnson, served on the Village Board and participated in the creation of the village's tax incremental financing district, which includes the business park. He is looking forward to the village having a plan.

"Sturtevant has what I call 'spot zoning,' which means residential properties sit next to commercial properties that sit next to industrial property, and so this plan should really help the board map out future development," he said.

Like other village residents, John Johnson would have preferred that the village restore the current depot building or construct a new building in its place. But he also knows from experience that the village was faced with few choices if it wanted to keep an Amtrak stop in Sturtevant.

## **More concerns voiced**

"The parking is horrible at the current depot and let's face it, that building has been in bad shape since I was a kid, but I know the village didn't have any choice in that matter," he said. "But I am concerned that people riding the train will simply take Highway 20 home instead of visiting the businesses along Wisconsin St."

Theodore Turner and his wife, Cathy, live and own Nancy's Haus of Collectibles and Carriage House Antiques on Durand Ave.

Turner said the village's development on Durand Ave. and Wisconsin St. is fine. What concerns him is a proposed state Department of Transportation overpass over the railroad tracks that bisect Sturtevant that would essentially end in his front yard and change the landscape of Durand Ave.

"I'm concerned about what an overpass will mean for the people who live and have businesses here, including me and my wife," Turner said. "Building that overpass would mean too many people would have to move and that isn't right."

Christiansen also is worried that the state will push the overpass through and that the village will be able to do little to stop it.

"That overpass will make Wisconsin St. a dead end, and if that happens, we're finished here," he said.

Kittel also didn't agree with a possible overpass.

"If that overpass goes through, this village will be a ghost town, because no one will stop at any of our shops or restaurants. They'll just drive right through," she said.

But residents and business owners who were interviewed agreed that having a plan for the two roads will be good if Barrientos can deliver long-range plans that include some of the wishes and hopes of residents and business owners.

From the Jan. 30, 2005, editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel  
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